

Please Don't Hit On Me, Bug Me, or Harass Me

Looking up words in the dictionary is highly recommended.

[Michele A. Berdy's The Word's Worth](#)

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Liza Summer / pexels

Рыпаться: fidget, pester, make a ruckus

A few weeks ago a video appeared on social media of a Russian woman being asked about Poland. She was very angry and indignant. She said that Poland should be destroyed because the country “всё рыпалась на нас.”

Whatever рыпаться is, it must be absolutely diabolical if it requires the immediate destruction of any country that does it, right?

Well, you decide.

To be honest, this is a word I mentally mistranslated for a long time. If you watch cop shows on television, the bad guys usually kidnap someone, tie them up, and snarl: Сиди и не рыпайся! In American cop shows, the bad guys say “Sit down and shut up!” So I assumed Russian bad guys said the same thing and understood рыпаться to mean “to be quiet.”

But Russian gangsters actually tell their victims to sit still — don’t thrash around, don’t fidget, don’t jerk all over the place.

When I looked it up — always a good idea, it turns out — I discovered that the verb pair рыпаться/рыпнуться was derived from the same root as рыть (to dig) and рвать (to tear). Together that digging and tearing translates into squirming, fussing, wiggling, and generally making a ruckus.

Of course, the word can be used in other non-criminal contexts: Если ты талант — тебя заметят, а если нет — сиди и не рыпайся (If you’ve got talent, people will notice you. If you don’t – sit and keep your head down.)

You might hear it in political discussions, too: В политике всё по-простому: если у тебя нет реальной точки опоры, не рыпайся. (In politics it’s simple: if you don’t have real support, keep a low profile.)

When you add to рыпаться/рыпнуться на and a person or other entity, the thrashing and fidgeting get directed at someone. And here the meaning changes. In this context, рыпаться means to harry someone, to harass them, to bug them. На кого ты рыпнулся, придурок! (Who did you tick off, you idiot?) In geopolitical contexts, it means to harass, persecute, bother. Президент советует Европе не рыпаться на Россию (The president recommended that Europe not harass Russia).

Another good word for fidgeting and twitching is дёргаться. This might describe a facial tic: Отчего у вас щека стала дёргаться? (How come your cheek started twitching?) Or it might be the same kind of fidgeting that angers the criminal classes: Не дёргайся, падла! (Stop moving around, you dirtbag!) Or it might mean a kind of figurative fidgeting: Может, и впрямь лучше смириться, не дёргаться? (Maybe it’d be, like, better to stop stressing and make up?) You might even use it to calm someone down: Не дёргайся! (Take it easy!)

Лезть (to crawl or climb) can be used figuratively for any kind of encroaching. For example, it might mean to stealthily slip into something or some place for nefarious purposes: Смотри! Он лезет в портфель и достаёт тетрадку (Look! He’s sticking his hand into that briefcase and pulling out a notebook!) It might mean to meddle or interfere: Не надо лезть не в свое дело (Don’t stick your nose in someone else’s business). Or to bother someone with talk when they aren’t interested: Женщина сидела тихо, не лезла с разговорами (The woman sat quietly and didn’t try to start a conversation). And finally, it can mean to pester someone: Как ты смел лезть ко мне с такими пустяками? (You got some nerve, pestering me with this nonsense!)

Приставать (perfective: пристать) is yet another Russian verb that describes pestering, bothering and bugging people in various ways. One way is very annoying, mostly to women: Если он станет слишком приставать, дай мне знать (If he really hits on you, let me know). It can go the other way, too: Она стала приставать ко мне, чтобы заставить мужа

ревновать (She started coming on to me to make her husband jealous).

But you can be harassed in non-sexual ways: Если кто-то станет к вам приставать с вопросами на которые вы не хотите отвечать, дайте мне знать (If someone starts pestering you with questions you don't want to answer, just let me know.)

Приставать is also a good word to know if you work at a dock: Часовые кричат, чтоб яхта не приставала к берегу (The guards shouted so the yacht wouldn't come to shore). Here you might say that the shore doesn't want the yacht pushing in.

So, what about that angry woman in the video? She seems to want to annihilate a country because it bugs her.

To which I say: Сиди и не рыпайся.

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